

HONORING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, OFFICE OF STRUCTURE MAINTENANCE, AND INVESTIGATIONS

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the dedicated professionals of the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) Office of Structure Maintenance and Investigations, (SM&I), which is marking its 80th anniversary of service to the people of the Golden State.

In 1927, while Babe Ruth swatted 60 home runs and Charles Lindbergh crossed the Atlantic Ocean solo, the State of California showed the wisdom and foresight to create a special branch of engineering experts to ensure the safety and reliability of its State highways and bridges.

Babe Ruth's home run mark fell in 1961 to the bat of Roger Maris and air travel over the "pond" became a routine occurrence. All the while, California's bridge maintenance program has stood the test of time and continues to deliver on its mission of providing Californians with a safe and dependable network of bridges carrying traffic and pedestrians over rivers, canyons, railroads, highways and city streets all across the Golden State.

That effort is still paying dividends for California and the Nation. More than 24,000 State and local agency bridges in California reliably serve millions of travelers and billions of dollars of commerce because of the ongoing care provided by Structure Maintenance and Investigations staff. These structures run the gamut from the majestic San Francisco-Oakland Bay and San Diego-Coronado bridges to the historic arch spans along the scenic Monterey Coast and the tens of thousands of unassuming concrete, steel and timber bridges dotting the California landscape. The safety and reliability of California's bridges has been instrumental in fueling one of the world's largest economies. More than 160 million vehicle trips are recorded on California's transportation system each day.

Caltrans Structure Maintenance and Investigations engineering personnel have conducted more than 650,000 routine inspections and thousands of special hydraulic, steel and underwater bridge inspections since 1927. They look for any signs of deterioration, fatigue or distress in bridge decks, superstructures and substructures, and the office has initiated tens of millions of dollars in repairs to ensure the safety and structural integrity of each public agency bridge in California.

Thanks to the ongoing dedication of the Structure Maintenance and Investigations professionals, no public agency bridge in California has ever collapsed due to neglect. The bridge inspection program pioneered by Structure Maintenance & Investigations has become the model for transportation agencies around the Nation and the world.

As part of its ongoing bridge maintenance program, Structure Maintenance and Investigations maintains a library of more than one million documents, some dating back more than 100 years, documenting the history of each public agency bridge in California.

Structure Maintenance and Investigations personnel have responded in a timely and heroic fashion to a myriad of natural and man-made disasters to protect public safety and complete any needed repairs to California's transportation system. While their efforts have been well chronicled in major disasters such as the 1989 Loma Prieta and 1994 Northridge earthquakes, SM&I personnel routinely answer the call to protect public safety. Such a case occurred last year in California's Sonoma County where two engineers risked their own safety to inspect the Highway 128 bridge over the rampaging Russian River near Geyserville. The engineers determined that the floodwaters had compromised the integrity of the bridge. They closed the structure and initiated a project that resulted in construction of a new bridge.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, it is appropriate for us to convey to all the dedicated professionals at the California Department of Transportation's Office of Structure Maintenance and Investigations the thanks of a grateful State for years of dedicated service ensuring the safety and reliability of California's transportation system.

RECOGNIZING THE SUBURBAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF SUMMIT, NEW PROVIDENCE, AND BERKELEY HEIGHTS, NEW JERSEY

HON. MIKE FERGUSON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Mr. FERGUSON. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the Suburban Chamber of Commerce of Summit, New Providence, and Berkeley Heights, New Jersey as it celebrates its 90th Anniversary Gala this evening.

Since 1917, the Suburban Chamber of Commerce has been serving local business interests in and around the city of Summit. The Chamber is a fixture in the community, serving the interests of a wide variety of businesses and professionals, and providing valuable help to charitable organizations.

For the past 25 years the Chamber has overseen the Suburban Chambers Foundation, a charitable organization whose most important projects include scholarships for graduates of Summit, New Providence and Berkeley Heights high schools, and the Vest-A-Cop program which helps pay the costs of bullet-proof vests for local police officers.

The Chamber plays a key role in developing and bringing the community together. Each year it promotes numerous local events and charities, including the Summit Summer Street Fair, Santa's Arrival, First Night® Summit, the New Providence Christmas Walk, the Berkeley Heights Fall Festival, and May is Pride in Berkeley Heights.

I am proud that the 7th District that I represent is home to a fine organization so dedicated to fostering community, and I am pleased to honor the Chamber's 90th anniversary today.

TRIBUTE TO RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas for its innovation in water conservation. Roger Kiker, a civil engineer at the base, and his staff have saved taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars with their water conservation efforts. Their ingenuity in implementing an automatic meter reading (AMR) system and other infrastructure improvements have relieved some drought concerns in the San Antonio area, which relies solely on the Edwards Aquifer for water.

Mr. Kiker and the Randolph Air Force Base have proven to be leaders in water conservation and environmental protection. Randolph Air Force Base has reduced its water consumption by 6.1 percent and saved over 117,000,000 gallons of water this year by reusing water, planting drought tolerant landscaping, and fixing leaky meter infrastructure.

This week, Mr. Kiker and Randolph Air Force Base will receive a 2007 Presidential Award for Leadership in Federal Energy Management for water conservation. I commend them for their success in this project and hope others will follow suit in preserving our precious natural resources.

90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 147TH FIGHTER WING ELLINGTON FIELD, TEXAS

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, in the United States, we have an incredible history, especially when it comes to our Armed Forces. Today, I want to recognize one of Houston's own, the 147th Fighter Wing/111th Fighter Squadron Texas Air National Guard out of Ellington Field, Texas. Their distinguished accomplishments during times of war and peace have made them well-known not only in Texas, but across the globe.

The 111th Aero Squadron met its beginnings at Kelly Field on Aug. 14, 1917. However, it was not until June 29, 1923, that the Squadron moved to its current location, Ellington Field. During the same year, they were designated a part of the Texas National Guard under the title of the 111th Observation Squadron, 36th Division.

Their emblem, which is one of the oldest in the United States Air Force, known as the Ace-In-The-Hole, signifies their interconnectedness to the State of Texas. Its immortal stance in Texas culture results from the grandfathering of the insignia at its inception. This motion works to prevent any future alteration to the historical design.

On Sept. 25, 1940, as the country was on the brink of World War II, the 111th became part of the federal war effort. Soon thereafter, the Squadron was reintroduced as part of the 68th Observation Group.

Following a short assignment protecting the U.S. border, they began preparations for overseas combat. During the war, their initial deployments led the Squadron to the Algerian beaches, in Operation Torch. In 1943, the 111th was chosen to take part in the Tunisian Campaign of the Army's II Corps. Later, assigned to the 7th Army in Sicily, they served as the aerial support to allied troops until the end of the war.

Respectably, this famed crew flew 3,840 missions from 1943 to 1945. While serving as the eyes of the military, they destroyed 44 enemy aircraft, damaged 20 and had 12 probable kills. Because of their valor, the 111th received eight Battle Stars, the Presidential Unit Citation as well as recognitions from the French Government.

In December 1945, they returned to Texas as the 111th Fighter Squadron. On Oct. 10, 1950, the 111th returned to battle for the Korean War. Throughout this 22-month theater, they became attached to the 136th Fighter Group. The Squadron again performed gallantly and destroyed 1,343 railroad cars, 1,943 buildings, 88 bridges, 126 gun emplacements, 89 boats, 2 MIG-15 fighters and participated in activities that resulted in 5,578 enemy troop casualties.

When foreign disagreements subsided, they were assigned to Air Defense Command on U.S. soil. Later, pilots from the Fighter Wing provided aerial support for American troops during the Vietnam Conflict from 1968–1970.

Following the events of September 11, 2001, the newly renamed 147th escorted President George W. Bush and his father on-board Air Force One back to Washington, DC. Later that year, they were deployed within the United States in support of Operation Noble Eagle.

The 147th was deployed in 2005 for Operation Iraqi Freedom and the Global War on Terror. Continuing the Squadron's noted performance during previous conflicts, pilots of the Fighter Wing flew 462 sorties, with 100 percent maintenance delivery, 100 percent mission effectiveness along with 100 percent weapons employment hits while under extremely challenging combat conditions.

Although the list of overseas wartime accomplishments for the 111th are many, so is the impact and assistance provided by the same men and women on a national level to local issues. Since 1989 the Fighter Wing pilots have utilized the C-26 Merlin to conduct counter-drug law enforcement missions throughout the area. Most recently, in response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Squadron came to aid those in this area who needed it most. These fine Americans have and continue to provide tremendous service to the United States, the State of Texas and to the communities surrounding Ellington Field.

I am proud to recognize the many accomplishments of this great group of Texas patriots. On the 90th anniversary, I would like to recognize these brave men and women for their service to the United States. I am also privileged to have served at Ellington Field in the United States Air Force Reserve, 704th TAS, 924th Troop Carrier Group, 446th Troop Carrier Wing from 1970–1976.

And that's just the way it is.

IN HONOR OF SHREVE "MAC"
ARCHER III

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory and many accomplishments of Shreve "Mac" Archer III, pediatrician, race driver, inventor, and my cousin. He passed away in June, 2007 after a long battle with leukemia.

Mac was born in St. Paul, MN, in September, 1948. He moved to California and attended the University of California at Santa Cruz and Claremont Men's College, finally obtaining his medical degree in 1979 at the University of Miami, Florida. As a pediatrician in Carmel, CA, he specialized in learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, and behavioral problems. He was well known for treating, studying, and funding programs for shaken baby syndrome and traumatic brain and spinal injuries.

My cousin was equally well known on the racing circuit as a professional motorcycle racer, and later as a vintage car racer for 20 years in his beloved "Old Bertha," a bright red Cobra 427. Steve Earle, who founded the Monterey Historic Races 34 years ago, said of Mac: "He always drove as competitively as possible, but without losing his manners. He was a gentleman and a great guy, and everyone admired his driving."

Mac combined his knowledge of medicine and racing in a most creative way. His business, Entropy Racing and Impact Medical Technologies, created safety products for cars, motorcycles, and jets. He and his long-time friend Eric Bernhard designed such items as a helmet for the U.S. Air Force that lessens the impact experienced when ejecting from jets. They patented the idea of flexible armor and created a back protector that cushions the spinal cord, which is now standard gear for motorcycle racers and is being used more and more by street riders. They designed an air bag for motorcycle helmets that stabilizes the neck in a crash, and helped to design the extractable seat now used in Formula 1 racecars. At the time of his death he was working on a child's safety car seat that would move on tracks to reduce the g-load during a crash and also protect the head.

Madam Speaker, I honor the life of Shreve "Mac" Archer III, a man who combined his work and play in such a way as to make the world a better place for all of us. I know I speak for every Member of Congress in offering our condolences to his wife, Kim, and their sons Damon and Shreve IV. His passing leaves us sad for our own loss, but grateful for the life he shared with us.

GOLF COURSE PRESERVATION
AND MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2007

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today, I introduce the Golf Course Preservation and Modernization Act to renovate and modernize

the three National Park Service, NPS, golf courses in the District of Columbia. Several years of research, investigation and consulting on ways to improve these courses demonstrate this bill is necessary to turn around the deterioration of these unique and valuable Federal assets. Langston Golf Course, Rock Creek Golf Course, and East Potomac Golf Course are in desperate need of capital investment to maintain and preserve their historic features and to reverse decades of deterioration.

East Potomac Golf Course was built in 1920 and included three courses that accommodated all levels of play, with an 18-hole tournament level course and two nine-hole practice courses. East Potomac was initially segregated, with African Americans permitted to play only on Mondays. The course was desegregated in 1941 by the Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes, following pressure from an African American women golfers club, the Wake Robin Golf Club. Rock Creek Golf Course opened in 1923 as a nine-hole golf course and an additional nine holes were added to make Rock Creek an 18-hole tournament level course in 1926. Langston Golf Course opened in 1939 as a segregated golf facility for African Americans and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Langston was the home course to the Royal Golf Club and the Wake Robin Golf Club, the Nation's first clubs for African American men and women golfers respectively. Langston was named for John Mercer Langston, the first African American Congressman from Virginia elected in 1888. Originally a nine-hole course, Langston's expansion to an 18-hole course began in 1955, but was not completed until the mid-1980s.

The courses were built and have been administered by the NPS since the early 20th century for the enjoyment of the general public. However, despite their best efforts, NPS has had a constant struggle to maintain the courses. None has been modernized and all three courses have fallen into disrepair and lack the amenities necessary to serve the public today. As a result, they are underused considering their value to the public.

NPS was created by Congress to "... conserve the scenery and the natural and historical objects and the wild life therein, and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." (16 U.S.C. 1) However, NPS's own backlog of repairs, its chronic funding limitations, and the continuing use of concession contracts that are inappropriate for the unique capital investment required for golf courses militate against appropriate maintenance, historic preservation and the NPS mission "to leave them unimpaired for the public enjoyment." This bill will restore the original intent of Congress, consistent with this important NPS mission.

The three courses together constitute an undervalued public asset that, if appropriately funded, could be renovated and modernized, facilitating affordable recreation, attracting significantly more golfers, and perhaps producing new revenue for the United States Treasury. Unlike other NPS facilities, golf courses require unique and continuing significant capital investment to keep them not only maintained but operational. As a result for nearly 100